

House Resolution 1905

By: Representatives Carter of the 175th, Shaw of the 176th, and Black of the 174th

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending Joe Nathan Rivers for his outstanding leadership, guidance,
2 and support and for the many contributions that he has made to our country and to the
3 Valdosta community; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, Joe Nathan Rivers was born in Vidalia, Georgia; relocated in 1937 to Valdosta,
5 where he has resided ever since; and later married his lovely wife, Geneva, on March 31,
6 1951; and

7 WHEREAS, Joe Nathan is a member of New Life Ministries of Valdosta and is a man of
8 deep faith, a loving husband, and a wonderful father to his children and many other children
9 in the Valdosta community; and

10 WHEREAS, about 48 years ago, Joe Nathan did not think he was doing anything special
11 when he let kids play baseball in his large front yard, but when the number rose to 100 boys,
12 he decided to organize them into several different groups to better teach them the
13 fundamentals of baseball; and

14 WHEREAS, Joe Nathan realized there was a need to secure community support to further
15 the kids' increasing interest in baseball so talked other coaches into helping and then turned
16 his attention to getting equipment, such as uniforms, gloves, and balls; through his efforts
17 and the efforts of those that helped him, those kids formed the nucleus of the first black
18 youth baseball league in Valdosta; and

19 WHEREAS, Joe Nathan encountered many people who would not help him unless his team
20 had a charter, and getting a charter was not an easy thing to do; in those days, blacks still did
21 not play baseball with whites; he finally received the charter he had sought in 1959 when he
22 contacted the Little League headquarters in Williamsport, Pennsylvania; and

23 WHEREAS, Coca Cola later provided Joe Nathan with uniforms, and generous Valdostans
24 helped get additional balls and bats for practice; Joe Nathan never lost perspective and
25 always did his best to see that the kids benefitted; and

26 WHEREAS, Joe Nathan himself was a tough competitor in his own right when he was
27 growing up; as a ferocious hitter playing the position of linebacker for Dasher, he earned the
28 nick name "Dirty Joe Rivers," and his fearless playing earned him a spot as an all-star player
29 in the Southern Conference; and

30 WHEREAS, dedication is what made Joe Nathan Rivers such a good motivator to his
31 baseball players; according to Joe Nathan, "The trick is to stay ahead of them. If the kids
32 did ten push-ups, I would do 20. That's how you earn their respect."

33 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
34 the members of this body join in recognizing and commending Joe Nathan Rivers for his
35 outstanding leadership, guidance, and support and for the many contributions that he has
36 made to our country and to the Valdosta community.

37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
38 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to Joe Nathan Rivers.